

NEWS RELEASE

Flagstaff Watershed Protection Project



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Great News for City Taxpayers!

Flagstaff AZ – A “home-run” is how City Management Services Director Rick Tadder characterizes it.

The City of Flagstaff recently closed a loan with the Arizona Water Infrastructure Finance Authority (WIFA) regarding financing the remaining balance of the Flagstaff Watershed Protection Project (FWPP) Bond. The recently closed Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) loan features \$1 million in forgivable principal. Combined with interest savings on forgivable principal, this will result in a \$1.4 million savings for Flagstaff’s property taxpayers. Thanks go out to our financial advisors, Stifel, the WIFA team and the City team for this success.

The WIFA loan will help the FWPP’s ongoing efforts to plan, conduct, and monitor needed forest treatment work in the Dry Lake Hills, designed to protect the watershed and community. “this is a great opportunity for the Clean Water State Revolving Fund to support our communities with watershed protection projects, we’re hopeful this project can set a model for similar work across the state,” said Daniel Dialessi, Executive director of WIFA.



WATER INFRASTRUCTURE
FINANCE AUTHORITY OF ARIZONA

FWPP is a collaborative partnership between the City of Flagstaff and the Coconino National Forest to reduce the threat of catastrophic wildfire and restore our forests. It was initially funded by a \$10 million Bond approved by Flagstaff voters in Nov 2012, the first-such voter-approved forest protection initiative in the country. Since that time, an additional \$8.4 million in outside funding has been obtained, with the majority of that coming from the U.S. Forest Service.

To-date, on City, State, Navajo Nation, and Federal land within the Project area, 4,918 acres of harvesting/thinning has been completed, involving helicopter, steep-slope, and traditional processes. An additional 1,793 acres is under contract or underway, and another 1,257 acres is scheduled to begin work within the next 2-3 years. This work is fully funded with the current City Bond and outside contributions.

The Museum Fire, which burned 1,961 acres in the Dry Lake Hills area this past summer, was within the Project boundary. However, the majority of that - 1,225 acres, or 68% of the fire area - was outside of any planned, underway, or completed work sites. Paul Summerfelt, City Project Manager, says, “While extremely unfortunate, the fire demonstrated once-again the need to do this type work. We have much remaining within the Dry Lake Hills area, untouched by the fire, to complete. We are fully committed to doing so, and are, in-fact, fully re-engaged in that effort at this time.”

The final phase of the Project, Mormon Mtn south of town, is the headwaters for Lake Mary, a critically important source of drinking water for the City. The city is working diligently to obtain the required funding for roughly 2,600 acres in the Mormon Mtn area, and it’s slated for treatment as soon as funding is secured.

www.flagstaffwatershedprotection.org